



Scope of Practice Guide to the Administration of Subanesthetic/Low-Dose Ketamine

April 2022

Background

The Rhode Island Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education continues to receive questions regarding the scope of practice as it relates to administering subanesthetic/low-dose ketamine. After reviewing the results of a pilot program at Rhode Island Hospital, a review of the literature, and a review of advisory opinions from other states' Nursing Boards, the Rhode Island Board of Nursing is providing this scope of practice guidance.

Guidance

- Subanesthetic/low-dose ketamine may be administered with an order from an appropriate physician or other independent licensed provider (LIP) by a trained and competency-verified registered nurse (RN) in doses intended for relief of pain/analgesia or palliative care.
- The RN may not administer ketamine for the purpose of anesthesia, except in emergency situations when the RN is acting as a “third hand” and is under the direction of a physician or other LIP.
- The distinction between pain management dose and anesthetic dose must be clearly defined in the facility's policies and procedures.
- Information on the education and competencies required of RNs who may administer subanesthetic/low-dose ketamine must also be included in the facility policies.
- Organizational policies also must include, but are not limited to, indications for use, patient selection, contraindications, and patient monitoring.
- Continuous cardio-respiratory monitoring is required until the patient has been off infusion for at least two hours.